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Nodes of inclusion and exclusion: media, context and the shaping of contemporary movements across the Atlantic

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INTRODUCTION

This chapter is based on a comparative ethnographic research project¹ addressing the migration movements across the Atlantic between four cities (Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Lisbon and Porto), from 2011 to 2015, and their intersections with the movements of *things* (Appadurai 1988) across the same routes. The project examined all four cities as both sites of departure and destination. This theoretical and methodological option aspired to challenge the dominant assumptions concerning power relationships and their impact on migration trends between South American and European countries, in general; and simultaneously tackle present day post-colonial relationships between Portugal and Brazil, in particular. The movements of people and *things* were explored at three levels of analysis. The first (macro) aimed at identifying and contextualising the major lines that define and delimit these movements between the four cities, exploring how and to what extent they feed, compete and/or complement each other. The second (mezzo) investigated the specificities of each city as point of arrival and departure. Thirdly (micro), the impact of movement on identity and belonging was looked into through the analysis of domestic material culture and consumption practices.

This chapter will only focus on a very specific dimension of the Atlantic transits explored in the research project. It will examine the role of the media in general, and of social media in particular, in generating and disseminating information and knowledge produced by Portuguese and Brazilian media corporations (major newspapers and news agencies). How this information and knowledge has contributed to shape and promote these four cities as attractive settling locations for significant contingents of the Portuguese and Brazilian middle classes will then be analysed.

MIGRATION IN THE AGE OF GLOBAL CIRCULATION

The circulation of *things*, images, money, knowledge, media, information and, in particular, people is one of the most visible areas of inquiry in the social sciences. From examinations of transnationalism and cosmopolitanism to

1 *Atlantic crossings: materiality, contemporary movements and policies of belonging. Research Project funded by FCT (PTDC/CS-ANT/119803/2010).*

recent theories of mobility, social sciences continue to devote special attention to the impact of human movement both in present day subjective experience and social institutions, as well as on how subjects and institutions develop strategies to frame, control and make sense of it. The emphasis on migration, and on its causes and impact, is partially the result of the fact that present day human mobility, both in international and national scales is, according to the United Nations², at its highest levels in recorded human history. This situation has prompted the public debate of the theme, as well as political, economic and social responses, which try to capture, categorise and order the increasing diversity of routes, scales, temporalities and intensities of human motion. Hence, and even if stasis is by far the most regular experience in the life of the great majority of the world population, scholars have responded to this new picture and are working to identify alternative approaches to address motion and its (extra) ordinary effects on contemporary collective life.

Social theory presents us today with an extensive collection of concepts to capture and describe “those on the move”, which stand as possible alternatives to the classical concept of “the migrant”.³ However, and despite the term in use, all migrants (and travellers, expatriates or cosmopolitans) and their aspirations, beliefs and practices integrate various spatial networks and temporal linkages. This fact underlines the complexity of contemporary migrations’ multiple layers and dimensions, and draws attention to the importance of the specificities (Morley 2002) entailed in each particular experience. In reality, all migrations are grounded on details with reference to: who travels and who stays; when, how and in what circumstances does the first journey occur, as well as the others who follow and or stay; what historic, economic, political and cultural conditions mark the spaces crossed and the trajectories travelled; what is the impact of the journey overtime on personal biographies; and how are new and old relationships and networks characterised, along with the managing and displaying of belonging and affection.

The “transnational turn” (Vertovec 2007) introduced significant changes in the debate about the articulation of these several dimensions of migration.

2 Rio+20 (2012) – United Nations Conference on sustainable development.

3 The United Nations Migration Agency, the International Organisation for Migration, defines a migrant as any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a State away from their habitual place of residence, regardless of (1) the person’s legal status; (2) whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary; (3) what the causes for the movement are; or (4) what the length of the stay is.

It drew attention to the fact that most migrants maintain and manage their lives in spaces that go beyond national borders (Glick Schiller 1995), and to the importance of including within the analytical framework how institutions and states incorporate these movements and relations in order to control and manage them. Family and family ties emerged as especially significant in the structuring of transnational networks and relations. Transnationalism drew research away from approaches portraying those who migrated as passive reactors to the contexts and events that framed their journeys, promoting an alternative research agenda focused on migration experiences (Rosales 2017). Nowadays, in fact, various authors frequently focus on central aspects of these experiences and, particularly, on the importance of exploring the disconnections between the idealised, and often shared, plans and expectations every migration experience involves from the very beginning, and the subjective and objective conditions that those who move and those who stay actually experience. Tackling and comparing the migrant's imagined states and expectations with the narratives and observations of their daily routines, perceptions and positioning strategies (Rosales 2012) became, therefore, a crucial topic of analysis. It generated productive lenses to explore present day multiple forms of movement as cultural and social processes. Hence, migration is increasingly addressed through religion, material culture, media, food and many other subject matters, whose intersections with human movements are decisive in its understanding, besides promoting dialogue between circulation and stillness in contemporary societies.

The relationship between motion and stasis continues to challenge this field of study. Movement, and especially transnational movement, is far from being unproblematic in contemporary societies. In fact, and in spite of the current intensification and globalisation of human circulation, most of the world's population lives all their life in a relatively fixed and recognisable territory (Morley 2002). For many people, moreover, the possibility of moving continues to be impossible; while for others, it has become less necessary due to developments in ICT technologies and infrastructures. Circulation, therefore, needs to be seen within a frame that is broad enough to include, not only transience and motion, but also all the more stable and static dimensions of communal life.

A significant number of theoretical contributions have been consistently highlighting the centrality of community, kinship, residence and all other more or less stable forms of affiliation and belonging (Povrzanović Fryman

2015; Fortier 2000 and Gardner 2002) in migration contexts. This trend has proved to be productive in integrating human mobility in a picture that transcends movement itself and is big enough to refocus the discussion on the main structures shaping social life and how they react, adjust and incorporate the increasingly complex reality of present day circulation.

CONTEMPORARY ATLANTIC CROSSINGS BETWEEN PORTUGAL AND BRAZIL

The first stage of *Atlantic Crossings*' fieldwork was to interview 100 people who had migrated to and from one of the four cities the research was based on; while the second stage carried out participant observation with 5 families in each setting. The groups of respondents from the two Brazilian cities were mainly composed of skilled young Portuguese professionals, half of them married and with young children. Most of these individuals had been to Brazil before migration, as students and/or tourists, and claimed to know the country in general, and the city they choose to settle in relatively well. For all of them, migration was a new experience, in the sense that unlike many of their co-citizens who had migrated to Brazil in previous migration waves, their families did not have any prior migration experience.

The Portuguese families depict their migration to the two Brazilian cities as *a decision resulting from choice rather than from need*. In fact, most subjects resist being defined as migrants and prefer to use terms such as *expat*, *foreigner* or *traveller* to define their status in Brazil. Leaving one's country of origin is, in their view, *an enriching life experience* and/or a significant *stage in their transition from youth to adulthood*. In fact, all subjects consider movement, i.e. the ability of being mobile, an important, almost imperative, life dimension of today's global reality. Migration, and especially economic migration, however, is not evaluated the same way. This is why all subjects draw a clear dividing line between them and their social position in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo society today, and the other Portuguese migrants who arrived in Brazil many years ago to, according to them, escape poverty. A similar stance is expressed concerning all other migrants originating both from other non-European and non-North American locations. This dominant perception is further reinforced by a second, which pictures their mobility experience *as a highly invested and planned adventure*, therefore resulting only from their agency.

However, if movement is strategically organised and prepared, and its outcomes carefully calculated and controlled, it can also be described as a preventive mechanism to escape downward mobility, precariousness and material loss. The economic crisis the country has been facing since 2008 was a major topic of concern to all families, even if none of them was, in their words, *experiencing real difficulties* at the time they decided to migrate. This aspect introduces a conservative note in how migration is pictured and experienced by most subjects in the group, which is often conveyed in the sentence: *I decided to leave Portugal before something bad happened to me or my family.*

The second group of subjects, within the first stage of research, crossed the Atlantic in the opposite direction from the first group and settled in Lisbon and Porto. Like the first, this group is mostly made up of young skilled workers and post-graduate students who choose a Portuguese university to continue their studies. However, and in clear contrast with the first group, the subjects coming from Brazil openly claim to be *migrants* in Portugal, even if their migrant condition is, in some cases, nuanced by diverse explanations. In fact, some of the subjects explicitly stressed that, in their own words, *being a migrant in Portugal is a temporary condition since they were planning to apply for citizenship*, and others argued that *they lived in constant transit* between Brazil and Portugal, which made them somewhat different from *regular Brazilian migrants*. Like the first group, these subjects also carefully planned their migration, with high investment in their trajectories. This is especially evident in the cases of those who came to work in Lisbon and Porto, but also with those who have migrated to continue their studies. All subjects said they had carefully gathered a large amount of information about Portugal and the Portuguese legal system, as well as about Lisbon and Porto as places to live. All of them claimed to have a good knowledge of the country and its institutions, even if this was their first experience in Portugal for most.

The fact that both groups said they had carefully planned their journey to the Brazilian and Portuguese cities highlighted the potential significance of the media in contemporary migration experiences, as both a research field to gather information about key aspects of everyday life abroad and as an instrument for evaluating the possibility of particular places meeting personal aspirations and allowing present and future goals to be accomplished. Media analysis also proved important in exploring a second dimension directly related to the first: feeding prospective migrant imagination by promoting

idealised representations of some destinations and adverse representations of others.

The results of the first stage of the research showed that all subjects have used a significant variety of media to gather information and do research on prospective destinations concerning their personal migration. The media was used both before and after a final decision was made concerning the country and the city to emigrate to. Even if these results are significant *per se*, it is important to note that the questionnaire also revealed that subjects continued to use other very classical sources of information in migration contexts: family and friends. The importance of social networks (e.g. family, friends, colleagues, friends of friends) is especially visible when it comes to evaluating the reliability of the information gathered. Even if media content was never considered non-reliable, most subjects explained that it was often compared with material gathered through other (also reliable) sources of information.

MIGRATION IN THE MEDIA: THE PORTUGUESE AND BRAZILIAN PRESS

The first stage of the research produced extensive information regarding media uses. According to the data gathered, most subjects said they had made use of extensive sources of information, such as TV, printed media, radio and the Internet (e.g. webpages, blogs, social media, etc.) to investigate their prospective destinations. According to the results, the most significant source of information for both groups was the Internet, followed by printed media. However, when asked which sites were consulted, the online versions of the most prominent Brazilian and Portuguese newspapers and magazines stood out. This result illustrates the significance of the media for both groups and confirms the tendency towards a conservative position concerning the reliability of data, which was already evidenced by the importance attributed to family and friends as information sources.

The subjects in both groups said they were interested in a wide range of topics, when looking for information in the media directly related to their destination country and city. These topics ranged from structural aspects, such as the Brazilian and Portuguese health systems and services, job markets, security policies, housing, schools and school systems; to more subjective matters, such as the arts and culture scenes, leisure activities or cost of living, amongst others.

The fact that the information had been produced and displayed by traditional and reputable newspapers or magazines lent it, according to the subjects, if not the same value in terms of credibility as the data directly obtained from friends and family, at least a sign of quality and consistency that most of the other sources, in their words, *maybe did not offer*. This was the main reason to analyse the online versions of printed newspapers and magazines, which was not at first included in the research plan. However, its recurrent presence in the subjects' discourse about the four cities and what they had to offer as migration destinations, i. e. working and living conditions, receptivity towards foreign citizens and migrants, education and health opportunities and constraints, histories of success and misfortune, as well as international migration in general, led to it.

The sample included the online edition of a large collection of Portuguese and Brazilian newspapers. All the journalism dealing with international migration with a special focus on migratory trends in Portugal and Brazil, in general, and on the movements between the four cities, in particular, were retained. The time frame analysis was, for the Portuguese press, from July 2013 to September 2014; and for the Brazilian press, from April 2013 to September 2014. The research gathered a total of 307 pieces that were subjected to content analysis and classified according to their relevance to the project. From these, 213 were from Portuguese newspapers and 94 from Brazilian. The sample included both free and restricted access press⁴ and was representative of the most renowned newspapers and magazines in both countries.

The media content analysis was based on 14 pre-defined general topics, which emerged both from preliminary interviews with the subjects and from literature research.

THE MATTER OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION: THE BRAZILIAN PRESS

The most visible topic emerging from the news sample of Brazilian press is not the *Atlantic Crossings* of Portuguese people seeking a better life in Brazil, but the Haitian migration. The flow between Portugal and Brazil was, however, the second most significant theme (15) in all the Brazilian press articles dealing directly with immigration. These articles are significantly diverse and deal with a wide variety of topics, such as: the maintenance of Portuguese cultural

4 Subscribed access.

Table 7.1*Migration in Portuguese and Brazilian Media*

TOPICS	PORTUGUESE MEDIA 213 (N)		BRAZILIAN MEDIA 94 (N)	
	Migration total	Port./Brazil Brazil/Port.	Migration total	Port./Brazil Brazil/Port.
Flows	52 (24.4%)	9 (17.0%)	32 (16.6%)	4 (17.39%)
Illegality	22 (10.3%)	7 (13.2%)	18 (9.38%)	—
Historical relationships	6 (2.8%)	2 (3.8%)	8 (4.7%)	1 (4.34%)
Employment (general)	8 (3.8%)	—	10 (5.21%)	1 (4.34%)
precariousness	8 (3.8%)	3 (5.7%)	8 (4.17%)	—
entrepreneurship	8 (3.8%)	3 (5.7%)	3 (1.56%)	—
unskilled labour	9 (4.2%)	1 (1.9%)	2 (1.04%)	—
skilled labour	42 (19.7%)	9 (17.0%)	13 (6.67%)	3 (13.04%)
remuneration	4 (1.9%)	2 (3.8%)	—	—
Crime	36 (16.9%)	13 (24.5%)	4 (2.08%)	2 (8.69%)
Integration	17 (8.0%)	1 (1.9%)	3 (1.56%)	2 (8.69%)
Return migration	7 (3.3%)	1 (1.9%)	1 (0.52%)	—
Economy (general)	7 (3.3%)	3 (5.7%)	—	—
crisis	24 (11.3%)	4 (7.5%)	11 (5.73%)	1 (4.34%)
social mobility	1 (0.5%)	1 (1.9%)	2 (1.04%)	—
remittances	8 (3.8%)	4 (7.5%)	5 (2.6%)	—
sectors/exports	1 (0.5%)	1 (1.9%)	—	—
public/private agreements	7 (3.3%)	3 (5.7%)	5 (2.6%)	2 (8.69%)
Cultural costs	1 (0.5%)	1 (1.9%)	4 (2.08%)	1 (4.34%)
Cultural references	7 (3.3%)	3 (5.7%)	11 (5.73%)	4 (17.39%)
Migration policies	15 (7.0%)	3 (5.7%)	9 (4.69%)	—
attraction	26 (12.2%)	8 (15.1%)	6 (3.13%)	2 (8.69%)
containment	13 (6.1%)	—	1 (0.52%)	—
support	—	—	18 (9.38%)	—
Demography	24 (11.3%)	2 (3.8%)	9 (4.69%)	—
Xenophobia/discrimination	—	—	3 (1.56%)	—

traditions by the migrant communities of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro; the positive integration of Portuguese workers in the Brazilian skilled labour market and their entrepreneurship competences; the Portuguese economic crisis and the immigration attraction policies developed by the Portuguese government, such as the *Golden Visa Programme*; and the opening of places specifically for Brazilian students at Portuguese Universities.

There were, in fact, 5 articles exclusively devoted to the Portuguese economic crisis and its impact on Portuguese emigration rates. The Brazilian immigration policies were also a significant topic. The articles devoted to this topic particularly emphasised the new Brazilian legislation on the topics of temporary and work visa programmes, the national policies for attracting foreign health professionals (especially doctors), and the excessive bureaucracy of the Brazilian legal system concerning migration. The flow out of Brazil did not have the same attention from the press as immigration. Some articles addressed the “pros and cons of life abroad”, from a Brazilian point of view, while other pieces drew attention to the visibility and impact of the return migration going on in the Brazilian population residing in Portugal, as a consequence of the economic crisis. The existence of a dominant international representation of Brazil as an “exotic and exciting destination” and place to live also attracted the attention of the Brazilian press during the period of analysis.

THE MATTER OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION: THE PORTUGUESE PRESS

Unlike the Brazilian press, the Portuguese main newspapers and magazines devoted a great deal of attention to migration during the whole analysis time frame. Hence, there is a significant number of articles in the research sample addressing the high emigration rates Portugal was facing at the time per se, as well as several opinion texts that explore the theme of emigration and identify it as a direct consequence of the economic crisis; or as a possible way of balancing the economic insecurity, risk of unemployment and lack of opportunities resulting from the financial crisis. These two topics – emigration and emigration and crisis - are often explored in association with others, such as the demographic implications of migration; the impact of migration on the national skilled labour force; or the national immigration policies in times of strong emigration flows.

There are also a significant number of pieces exploring the young age of present day Portuguese emigrants. These articles in particular tend to stress

the economic and demographic risks this new emigration trend inflicts on the future of a country such as Portugal, which already had a high rate of aged population before the crisis. There are also 5 articles directly addressing the Brazilian policies to attract foreign doctors and engineers (with a special focus on the Portuguese who decided to join these programmes). The great majority of the articles are, however, dedicated to the emigration of skilled Portuguese men and women and reporting their lives abroad. These last articles portray the migration of this particular group as positive, not only from a professional and economic angle, but also in terms of the quality of life they have achieved abroad.

Regarding the movements across the Atlantic from Brazil to Portugal, there is a significant and prevailing presence of articles in the Portuguese press that continue to explore the classic journalistic topics devoted to migration issues. The most frequent of these topics are: illegal labour, crime, drugs, trafficking and prostitution. The *Golden Visa Programme* implemented in Portugal also got the attention of the Portuguese press. Most of the articles criticised this particular policy for the pressure it put on the housing market, considered an additional stress factor with negative economic impact on the already fragile Portuguese population suffering from generalised financial cutbacks at the time.

The analysis took into account the data concerning the number of times these articles were assessed, viewed and/or shared. This exercise was limited by the fact that some of the webpages did not allow access to this specific data, while others provided a large amount of information regarding the number of viewings, forwards, prints, comments and shares in the social media their articles had. A substantial number of the articles included in the sample (both in the Portuguese and Brazilian press) presented a significant number of viewings, were shared on Facebook and Twitter and were intensively debated for more than a week in the newspapers' webpages.

CRITICAL ANALYSIS AND SOME TENTATIVE CONCLUSIONS

The content in the online versions of the Portuguese and Brazilian media are representative of the different economic, politic and social positions the two countries were experiencing at the time on the international scene. The Brazilian economy was being boosted and the country was in the spotlight,

not only due to its economic growth, but also by being the host country for the World Cup (in 2014) and the Olympics (2016). Portugal, in contrast, was experiencing great instability. Strongly affected by the financial crisis, the country was dealing with the consequences of a rigid austerity policy and facing very high rates of unemployment and emigration. And even if the major contingent of people exiting the country was composed of unskilled workers heading towards European countries, such as the UK and Germany, the Portuguese media was particularly focused on exploring the departure of a minority group: the highly skilled young professionals. This focus created a perception that Portuguese emigration was mostly highly skilled, young and heading to Europe; but also to post-colonial destinations such as Brazil and Angola. This had a great impact on the public debate of the matter and blurred the true impact of exits from the country at that particular time. It also prevented the discussion of Portuguese emigration by the media in a longer term, structural way. By presenting this emigration flow as distinctive in terms of age and socio-economic composition, when compared with all the others that make up the long history of Portuguese emigration, the media indirectly helped to establish both a reductionist picture of the topic and dividing lines between migrants.

A good example of the prominence of this main representation is *The Portuguese at the Heart of the Euro*, published by *Público*, which tells the personal stories of young Portuguese who work at the European Central Bank and live trendy lives in central Europe. Another instance is the multimedia series, *Indubitably Portuguese*, also produced by *Público*, which presents the lives and migration experiences of young artists and highly skilled workers in online videos. Migration experiences are depicted as successful and those involved as educated and qualified people who directly engage in community and political activities in order to defend their best interests.

As for the Brazilian press, migration is addressed in two contrasting ways. When focusing on Brazilian emigrants, the content tends to stress both the advantages (e.g. security and higher wages) and disadvantages (e.g. distance from family and lack of integration or precarious jobs) of migration. In both cases, immigrants or prospective emigrants give their testimonies and are photographed. Brazil is almost always portrayed as a welcoming country, which accepts and fully integrates migrants, in general; and Portuguese migrants, in particular, due to the existing historical and cultural bonds between the two countries. The press in both countries, in fact, tends to make use of colonial

and post-colonial arguments to explore and justify the positive representation of Portuguese migrants in Brazil in a similar way.

To conclude, the media had a significant impact on both groups' migration experiences. This impact was particularly clear in terms of migration planning. The media is a powerful information tool and was used intensely to gather data on a diversity of topics concerning prospective migration destinations, which all subjects considered a key aspect to their successful professional and social integration. Its importance was only surpassed by information and knowledge provided by friends and family with previous migration experiences. The information gathered in the Portuguese and Brazilian media played another significant role for the Portuguese group: it provided the subjects with an overall portrait of how to present and evaluate their own ongoing migration experiences, based on the stories of other migrants with similar backgrounds and experiences. It also gave them important material to establish a dividing line between them and other migrants, in general; and Portuguese migrants in Brazil, in particular.

Every migrant residing in the four cities was highly proactive in gathering data in order to inform and justify the crucial options all migration entails. Nonetheless, the sources explored were rather conservative, since the majority showed a clear preference for mainstream newspapers and magazines. This choice is justified by arguments stressing the objectivity and reliability of the information displayed which, in their view, highly compensated for some lack of diversity and representativeness on how the contemporary international circulation of people was being portrayed and their experiences examined during the period of analysis.

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